

## Bright Successfully Adds Disaster Funding Amendment to School Construction Bill

WASHINGTON, DC- Congressman Bobby Bright supported H.R. 2187, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act. The bill provides local school districts resources to make their facilities more environmentally and energy efficient. While H.R. 2187 contains specific funding for schools damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, it did not authorize funding for damages from other natural disasters. Bright successfully sponsored an amendment to the bill that would set aside a portion of the money for other school districts affected by recent natural disasters. The amendment passed by a unanimous 433-0 vote, and the overall bill passed by a 275-155 margin.

From Congressman Bright's floor statement submitted for the record: "Congress would be shortsighted if we don't recognize that natural disasters happen across the country, across all seasons. Whether it's wildfires in the west, floods in the Midwest, ice storms in the north, hurricanes in the Gulf, or tornadoes throughout the country, our schools are damaged when Mother Nature strikes."

Bright sponsored the amendment due to the lack of additional funding for Enterprise High School following the devastating March 2007 tornado that leveled the school. The new high school remains under construction and the city and school board have exhausted their options for additional school funding.

Bright continued: "I cite the example in Enterprise because I'm sure other school districts across the country will experience similar issues as they recover from natural disasters. Over the past two months, my district alone has seen flooding and storms that have led to at least one federal disaster declaration. Small towns across America are simply not equipped to rebuild a mainstay in their communities like schools when they are destroyed by natural disasters. This is a way for the federal government to lend a helping hand to school districts in need.

"Moreover, I am a believer in the old adage 'if you're going to do something, do it right.' Rebuilding and repairing these schools to 21st Century and environmentally efficient standards will help create a positive and healthy learning experience for our students. The families and students who utilize these schools will be able to take pride in them for years to come."

Under the bill, local school districts will be able to access the funding through a grant process. It is estimated that Alabama alone will receive over \$105 million in funding from H.R. 2187. Bright is hopeful schools across the district that incurred damage from recent storms, floods, and tornados may also be able to use disaster funding from the bill once it is signed into law.

"This bill would greatly assist the City of Enterprise and the Enterprise City School System with rebuilding efforts," said City of Enterprise Mayor Kenneth W. Boswell. "We are currently \$9 million short in finishing the auxiliary facilities at Enterprise High School; however, the funding in this legislation would help us reach our goal of finishing the school which was destroyed by the March 2007 tornado. Given the state of the economy, this assistance could not come at a better time. I would like to thank Congressman Bright for his interest in the City of Enterprise and the Enterprise School System and for his understanding of the value of a quality education. We look forward to working with Congressman Bright and his staff to access the funding through the Department of Education once this bill is signed into law."

"We are very appreciative of the amendment sponsored by Congressman Bright," Enterprise Schools Superintendent Dr. Jim Reese said. "Enterprise Schools are still dealing with the after effects of a tornado that destroyed our schools and left eight children dead. Though we have received funding from various sources, we are still short of what we need. When this legislation is signed into law, I look forward to accessing its available funds so our school system will be one step closer to being whole again. I want to thank Congressman Bright for his efforts on this very important issue."